**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1.      A method for booting a computer system comprising:

determining when extended diagnostic testing was last performed on the computer system; and

in response to determining extended diagnostic testing has not been performed within a predefined time period, performing extended diagnostic testing on the computer system.

2.      The method of claim 1, wherein the determining comprises examining a timestamp indicative of when extended diagnostic testing was last performed on the computer system.

3.      The method of claim 2, further comprising updating the timestamp with the current time after performing extended diagnostic testing.

4.      The method of claim 1, wherein the determining comprises examining a free timer that is preset to the predefined time period upon performing extended diagnostic testing.

5.      The method of claim 4, wherein extended diagnostic testing is performed when the timer expires.

6.      The method of claim 1, further comprising generating a graphical user-interface screen indicating extended diagnostic testing has not been performed within a specified period of time.

7.      The method of claim 6, wherein the graphical user-interface screen allows users to choose whether or not to perform extended diagnostic testing.

8.     The method of claim 1, further comprising receiving the predefined time period from a user.

9.     The method of claim 8, further comprising generating a graphical user-interface screen that allows a user to enter the predefined time period.

10.     A method for booting a computer system, comprising:
        determining, for each of a set of one or more diagnostic tests, when the diagnostic tests were last performed; and
        in response to determining any selected one of the diagnostic tests has not been performed within a corresponding specified period of time, performing the selected diagnostic test.

11.     The method of claim 10, further comprising receiving from a user an indication of the one or more diagnostic tests in the set.

12.     The method of claim 11, further comprising receiving from the user specified periods of time corresponding to the diagnostic tests in the set.

13.     The method of claim 10, wherein the determining comprises examining, for each diagnostic test in the set, a corresponding timestamp.

14.     The method of claim 13, wherein the timestamp is indicative of when the corresponding diagnostic test was last performed.

15.     A computer readable medium containing a program for performing a boot process for a computer system which, when executed by a processor, performs operations comprising:
        determining when one or more diagnostic tests were last performed; and

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in response to determining the one or more of diagnostic tests have not been performed within one or more corresponding time periods, performing the one or more diagnostic tests.

16. The computer readable medium of claim 15, wherein the operations further comprise providing an indication that the one or more diagnostic tests have not been performed within the one or more corresponding specified time periods.

17. The computer readable medium of claim 15, further comprising providing an interface allowing a user to specify the one or more corresponding time periods.

18. A multi-processing computer system, comprising:
a plurality of hardware components; and
a service processor configured to boot the system and, during a boot process, perform one or more diagnostic tests on the hardware components, in response to determining the one or more diagnostic tests have not been performed within one or more corresponding time periods.

19. The system of claim 18, further comprising a hardware management console in communication with the service processor.

20. The system of claim19, wherein the hardware management console is configured to provide an indication that the one or more diagnostic tests have not been performed.

21. The system of claim 19, wherein the hardware management console is configured to provide a graphical user-interface screen allowing a user to specify periods of time associated with each of the one or more diagnostic tests.

22.    The system of claim 21, wherein the one or more diagnostic tests comprise at least one Logical Built-in Self Test and at least one Array Built-in Self Test, and wherein the graphical user-interface screen allows a user to specify a different time period for each.